

Week 2 - September 23, 2020

Today we are going to look at Jesus' human side. While Jesus was God and could work miracles and prophesize the future, he was also a human. He had friendships, family, felt emotions, just like anyone else. At the death of his friend Lazarus he cried. When he was hungry in the desert he was tempted by the devil to sin. Below we will take a look at Jesus' very human distress in the garden of Gethsemane where he was awaiting to be arrested by the religious authorities who wanted to crucify him.

This story takes place after Jesus' Last Supper. Fearing that he is going to die, Jesus goes to a garden near where he and his followers are staying. He brings Peter, James, and John with him. They are his closest friends and disciples and he wants them to be with him in his grief. He wants them to pray with him, however they keep falling asleep and ignoring that he is clearly in pain. This makes him angry at them.

The Gospel of Matthew Chapter 26, Verses 36 - 45

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, **“Sit here while I go over there and pray.”**

He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee [James and John] and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, **“My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me.”** He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, **“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.”**

When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, **“So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”**

Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again, **“My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your will be done!”** Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open. He left them and withdrew again and prayed a third time, saying the same thing again. Then he returned to his disciples and said to them, **“Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand when the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners.”**

Reflection

Sadness, fear, and anger are unpleasant feelings that are unfortunately part of human life.

How do you cope when you are sad or upset about something? Where do you go and what do you do? Do you like to be alone or do you spend time with people? What kinds of things help you the most?

Peter, James, and John were Jesus' closest friends, but they fell asleep when he probably needed them the most. **Have you ever experienced the feeling of someone you care about "falling asleep" when you needed them? How did you react?**

What do you think you can do to be there for others who are in need of help and emotional or spiritual support? Even if you can't fix someone's problems how can you show them care and concern for them?

What effect do you think prayer can have for people who are in distress or pain?

Discuss these questions together, and any other questions or insights you have about it, then read it again together, reflecting on what you've discussed. Finally say the prayer below, which was composed by Thomas Merton. If you like, you can ask God to be with someone in pain or distress.

My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always though
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.